

1 **Chapter 05**
2 **USDA Forest Service Wildland Fire and Aviation Program**
3 **Organization and Responsibilities**
4

5 **Introduction**

6 This Document is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the
7 standards for operational procedures and practices for the USDA Forest Service
8 Fire and Aviation Management program. The standards provided in this
9 handbook are based on current agency and interagency wildland fire
10 management policy, and is intended to provide fire and aviation program
11 guidance and to ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation
12 operations. This document will be reviewed and updated annually.
13

14 **Foundational Doctrine**

15 The following collection of principles and beliefs form the foundational doctrine
16 for fire suppression in the U.S. Forest Service. These principles and beliefs
17 operate at multiple organizational levels, including:

- 18 • Forest Service Wide (i.e., apply to all employees and activities)
- 19 • Fire and Aviation Management (i.e., are specific to the fire and aviation
20 management program)
- 21 • Fire Suppression (i.e., are specific to fire fighting activities).
22

23 **The Operational Environment**
24

25 • *Fire Suppression*

26 1. No resource or facility is worth the loss of human life, however the wildland
27 fire suppression environment is complex and possesses inherent hazards that
28 can, even with reasonable mitigation, result in harm to fire fighters engaged in
29 fire suppression operations. In recognition of this fact, we are committed to the
30 aggressive management of risk.
31

32 **Mission**
33

34 • *Forest Service Wide*

35 2. The Forest Service is prepared and organized to support national and
36 international emergencies with trained personnel and other assets when
37 requested.
38

39 3. Agency employees respond when they come across situations where human
40 life is immediately at risk or there is a clear emergency, and they are capable of
41 assisting without undue risk to themselves or others.
42

43 4. In responding to emergencies, we will bring the same professionalism and
44 passion for safety as we do to non-emergency situations.
45

1 5. Support for local fire emergencies takes priority over accomplishment of local
2 resource targets. Support of non-local fire emergencies will be at the discretion
3 of the local line officer, as bounded by agency agreements and Regional or
4 National direction.

5

6 6. A cooperative relationship between the Forest Service and other agencies is
7 essential. The Forest Service is committed to honor its part of the joint
8 responsibility to develop and maintain effective working relationships with its
9 intergovernmental cooperators.

10

11 • *Fire & Aviation Management*

12 7. Fire management is central to meeting the Forest Service mission –
13 conserving natural resources, restoring ecological health, and protecting
14 communities.

15

16 • *Fire Suppression*

17 8. Successful fire suppression is essential to support the Forest Service mission.

18

19 9. The intent of wildfire suppression is to protect human life, property, and at
20 risk lands and resources.

21

22 **Leadership and Accountability**

23

24 • *Forest Service Wide*

25 10. The hallmarks of Forest Service leadership are action, attitude, and
26 accountability.

27

28 11. Leaders express clear and concise intent to ensure assignments are managed
29 safely, effectively, and efficiently.

30

31 12. Leaders regularly monitor operations for effectiveness, and take action when
32 there is recognition of exceptional or problematic employee performance.

33

34 13. Both positive reinforcement and discipline will be based on individual
35 behavior as measured by: adherence to the rules; appropriate application of
36 doctrine, principles and guidelines; execution of responsibilities commensurate
37 with role; and appropriate use of available information.

38

39 • *Fire Suppression*

40 14. Demonstrated fitness for command is a requirement for leadership positions
41 associated with fire fighting.

42

43

44

45

46

1 **Roles and Relationships**

2

3 • *Forest Service Wide*

4 15. Commitment to duty, respect for others, and personal integrity are expected.

5 Every employee fosters a work environment that is enjoyable, rewarding,

6 recognizes the value of diversity, and is free of harassment.

7

8 • *Fire & Aviation Management*

9 16. Line officers with fire management responsibilities will have knowledge and

10 understanding of fire program management.

11

12 17. Contracted resources will meet identified standards for qualifications,

13 training, productivity, and efficiency necessary to meet emergency response

14 needs.

15

16 18. It is the Forest Service responsibility to initiate and participate in public

17 education efforts to promote support for necessary fire management activities.

18

19 • *Fire Suppression*

20 19. Every Forest Service employee has a responsibility to support fire

21 suppression emergencies in a manner that meets identified needs, and is within

22 their qualifications and capabilities.

23

24 **Operations**

25

26 • *Forest Service Wide*

27 20. Employees are expected and empowered to be creative and decisive, to

28 exercise initiative and accept responsibility, and to use their training, experience,

29 and judgment in decision-making to carry out their leader's intent.

30

31 21. Employees are expected and empowered to make reasonable and prudent

32 decisions to accomplish the agency mission while minimizing exposure to

33 hazards.

34

35 22. Clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders maximize effectiveness and

36 minimize confusion.

37

38 • *Fire Suppression*

39 23. When it is time to fight fire, we do so in a manner that maximizes

40 effectiveness of effort, has highest regard for firefighter and public safety, and

41 controls costs.

42

43 24. Every fire suppression operation is directed toward clearly-defined, decisive,

44 and obtainable objectives.

45

1 25. Command and control must be decentralized to cope with the unpredictable
2 nature of fire. To achieve their leader's intent and accomplish operational
3 objectives, subordinate commanders are required to make decisions on their own
4 initiative, and to coordinate their efforts.

5
6 26. Unity of effort is maintained and suppression actions are coordinated at all
7 times.

8
9 27. Using principles requires judgment in application, while adherence to rules
10 does not. In combination, principles and rules guide our fundamental wildland
11 fire suppression practices and behaviors, and are mutually understood at every
12 level of command.

13
14 28. Rapid deployment and concentration of fire suppression resources at the
15 decisive time and place is essential to successful fire suppression actions.

16
17 29. Maintaining high capability for initial attack is essential to public and fire
18 fighter safety, accomplishment of management objectives, and cost containment.

19

20 **Risk Management**

21

22 • *Fire Suppression*

23 30. We practice risk management to minimize the exposure and affects of the
24 inherent hazards in fire suppression while maximizing the opportunities to
25 achieve leader intent.

26

27 **Agency Administrator Positions**

28 The Forest Service Director of Fire and Aviation Management, the Director of
29 Human Resources and the Forest Service Line Officer Team have developed
30 core fire management competencies for inclusion into the position descriptions
31 and in selection criteria for agency administrators. They are presented here for
32 reference.

33

34 **Evaluation Criterion**

35 Knowledge of fire program management including ability to integrate fire and
36 fuels management across all program areas and functions; ability to implement
37 fire management strategies and integrate natural resource concerns into
38 collaborative community protection and ecosystem restoration strategies;
39 knowledge to oversee a fire management program including budget,
40 preparedness, prevention, suppression, and hazardous fuels reduction; ability to
41 serve as an agency administrator during an incident on an assigned unit; and
42 ability to provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diversified firefighting
43 workforce that exists in a "safety first" and "readiness" environment.

44

45

46

1 **Training and Core Competencies**

- 2 • Attend a regional or national Fire Management Leadership for Agency
3 Administrators training session
4 • Require a shadow assignment with a fully qualified agency administrator
5 • Receive training or experience in the Wildland Fire Decision Support
6 System (WFDSS).
7 • Provide a Delegation of Authority to incident commanders
8

9 **Line Officer Certification Program**

10 The following principles will guide certification of agency administrators in fire
11 management:

- 12 • Regional Foresters are accountable for certification of line officers
13 • Line officer evaluation includes standards for training, background and
14 experience, and demonstrated ability, which will result in a qualitative
15 evaluation of readiness by the Regional Forester
16 • When the complexity level of a fire exceeds a line officer's certification, a
17 coach will be assigned to advise (but not replace)
18 • This certification program will be periodically evaluated and updated as
19 needed
20 • Decision Support Groups may be requested and would be assigned as fire
21 costs approach certain thresholds
22 • The Coaching/Shadowing program, to be administered by each region, is an
23 integral part of this certification program
24

25 **Line Officers will be evaluated in three basic areas**

- 26 • Training
27 • Background and experience
28 • Demonstrated understanding of concepts and principles
29

30 This certification program is a multi-level process where line officers
31 demonstrate competence in one of three levels of managing fires. Those levels
32 would be Working, Journey, and Advanced.
33

34 **Guidelines**

35 In consideration of the appropriate level (Working, Journey, and Advanced) to
36 assign a line officer, the Regional Forester should consider the following
37 guidelines:

- 38 • For individuals that do not meet at least the Working Level, a coach will be
39 assigned to support that line officer in managing Type 3 or higher wildfire
40 incidents.
41

42 **Working Level** - The line officer could manage a low to moderate complexity
43 fire. The line officer should meet the following:

- 44 • **Training:** Fire Management Leadership or National Fire Management for
45 Line Officers, and WFDSS Certification (*FSM 5130*)

- 1 • **Background and Experience:** Successful management of a minimum of
2 one Type 3 or higher fire, or one successful higher complexity fire (Type 2
3 or higher) quality shadow assignment (consider complexity and size of the
4 fires). Management oversight of a low-complexity fire program and/or
5 experience as an agency administrator or representative. Applicable
6 experience in all hazard or other incident oversight may be considered in
7 lieu of this experience. Consider career fire experience.
- 8 • **Demonstrated Ability:** Successful evaluation by a coach (including
9 feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated
10 understanding and application of the responsibilities of an agency
11 administrator on smaller low-complexity fires with a basic understanding of
12 the elements of the core competencies.

13

14 **Journey Level** - The line officer could manage a moderate to high complexity
15 fire. The line officer needs to be certified at the Working Level and should meet
16 the following:

- 17 • **Training:** Fire Management Leadership or National Fire Management for
18 Line Officers, and WFDSS Certification (*FSM 5130*).
- 19 • **Background and Experience:**
- 20 ➤ Successful management of a minimum of one Type 2 or higher fire, or
21 one successful higher complexity fire (Type I) quality shadow
22 assignment, depending on fire experience (complexity and size of the
23 fires should be considered).
- 24 ➤ Management oversight of a moderate-complexity fire program or
25 experience as an agency administrator or representative on Type 2 or
26 higher fires.
- 27 ➤ Applicable experience in all hazard or other incident oversight may
28 also be considered in lieu of other guidelines.
- 29 • **Demonstrated Ability:** Successful evaluation by a coach (including
30 feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated
31 understanding and application of the responsibilities of an agency
32 administrator on moderate to large complex fires in the core competencies,
33 and other elements that may be relevant.

34

35 **Advanced Level** - The line officer could manage a high complexity fire. The
36 line officer needs to be certified at the Journey Level and should meet the
37 following:

- 38 • **Training:** Fire Management Leadership or National Fire Management for
39 Line Officers, and WFDSS Certification (*FSM 5130*).
- 40 • **Background and Experience:**
- 41 ➤ Successful management of a minimum of 5 Type 1 or 2 fires (at least
42 one of which is a Type 1 fire), depending on fire experience
43 (complexity and size of the fires should be considered).
- 44 ➤ Management oversight of a moderate to high-complexity fire program.
- 45 ➤ Applicable experience in all hazard or other incident oversight may
46 also be considered in lieu of other guidelines.

- 1 • **Demonstrated Ability:** Successful evaluation by a coach (including
2 feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated
3 understanding and application of the responsibilities of an agency
4 administrator on large complex fires in the core competencies, and other
5 elements that may be relevant.
6

7 **Other Considerations**

8 Core competencies, consistent with Fire Doctrine principles, include:

- 9 • Safety.
10 • Strategies and tactics for cost containment.
11 • Incident management processes.
12 • Understanding of decision support tools.
13 • Situational awareness of resource availability & allocation.
14 • Understanding fire agreements and cost apportionment.
15 • WFDSS experience
16 • Monitoring and Evaluation of fire operations.
17 • Risk Management.
18 • Social/Political awareness and interpersonal relations.
19

20 Other training opportunities to achieve core competencies - Additional training
21 opportunities/suggestions (will be updated as program is evaluated)

- 22 • Upper levels of fire leadership and fire management courses
23 • Be the actual line officer in the Type 3 IC certification sand table exercises
24 • Participate in advanced risk management training.
25 • The Fire Management for Agency Administrators course needs a
26 curriculum revision.
27 • Get assigned to a Type 1 or Type 2 team as a training assignment (e.g.
28 shadow Plans) and see the world from their viewpoint
29 • Assist in 420 simulation as a line officer
30 • WFDSS training
31 • Include risk management and fire management topics to annual line officer
32 meetings
33 • Attend staff rides (staff rides need to include a stand that portrays the line
34 officer perspective)
35 • Participate in prescribed fires and/or attend prescribed fire training.
36

37 **Guidance on the Selection of Coaches**

38 Coaches can be current or former line officers. The Regional Forester

39 determines the level of certification for which a coach is qualified.

40 Criteria for individuals serving as Coaches are as follows:

- 41 • Must be a “Journey” level line officer in dealing with large fire incident, or
42 rated at an experience level commensurate with incident being managed.
43 Present and past agency administrators can serve as coaches, including
44 retirees that were qualified/experienced.
45 • Is willing and able to serve as a Coach.

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1 Performance Standards

2 Add the following standards to the existing performance standards for Forest
3 Supervisors and District Rangers under Performance Standard #4, Leadership,
4 Coaching, and Supervising:

- 5 • Integrate fire and fuels management across all functional areas.
- 6 • Implement fire management strategies and integrate natural resource
7 concerns into collaborative community protection and ecosystem restoration
8 strategies on the unit.
- 9 • Manage a budget that includes fire preparedness, prevention, suppression,
10 and hazardous fuels in an annual program of work for the unit.
- 11 • Perform duties of agency administrator and maintain those qualifications.
- 12 • Provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diverse workforce in a "safety
13 first" environment.

14
15 These standards are based on current policy and provide program guidance to
16 ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation operations. This
17 document will be reviewed and updated annually.

**18
19 Specific Agency Administrator Performance Standards for Fire and
20 Aviation at the Field Level****21
22 Preparedness**

- 23 • Take all necessary and prudent actions to ensure firefighter and public
24 safety.
- 25 • Ensure sufficient qualified fire and non-fire personnel are available to
26 support fire operations at a level commensurate with the local and national
27 fire situation.
- 28 • Ensure accurate position descriptions are developed and reflect the
29 complexity of the unit. Individual Development Plan promote and enhance
30 FMO currency and development.
- 31 • Provide a written Delegation of Authority to FMOs that provides an
32 adequate level of operational authority at the unit level. Include Multi-
33 Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group authority, as appropriate.
- 34 • Identify resource management objectives to maintain a current Fire
35 Management Plan (FMP) that identifies an accurate level of funding for
36 personnel and equipment.
- 37 • Develop preparedness standards that are in compliance with agency fire
38 policies.
- 39 • Management teams meet once a year to review fire and aviation policies,
40 roles, responsibilities, and delegations of authority. Specifically address
41 oversight and management controls, critical safety issues, and high-risk
42 situations such as transfers of incident command, periods of multiple fire
43 activity, and Red Flag Warnings.
- 44 • Ensure fire and aviation preparedness reviews are conducted each year.

- 1 • Meet annually with cooperators and review interagency agreements to
- 2 ensure their continued effectiveness and efficiency.
- 3 • Convene and participate in annual conferences and fire reviews.
- 4 • Agency administrators, Fire Program Managers, and/or Safety and Health
- 5 Program Managers shall conduct after action reviews on all Type 3 fires
- 6 and a minimum of 10% of their unit's Type 4 and 5 fires and document
- 7 their inspections in the incident records.

8

9 Suppression

- 10 • Ensure use of fire funds is in compliance with Agency policies.
- 11 • The WFDSS will be used and approved on all fires that escape initial attack.
- 12 • WFDSS analysis that are expected to exceed \$10,000,000.00 in suppression
- 13 costs are forwarded to the Regional Office for review and approval.
- 14 • Personally attend reviews on Type 1 and Type 2 fires.
- 15 • Provide incident management objectives, written delegations of authority,
- 16 and a complete agency administrator briefing to Incident Management
- 17 Teams.
- 18 • Evaluate the need for resource advisors for all fires, and assign as
- 19 appropriate.
- 20 • For all unplanned human-caused fires where responsibility can be
- 21 determined, ensure actions are initiated to recover cost of suppression
- 22 activities, land rehabilitation, damages to the resource, and improvements.
- 23 • Ensure structure exposure protection principles are followed.

24

25 Safety

- 26 • Review safety policies, procedures, and concerns with field fire and
- 27 aviation personnel.
- 28 • Ensure timely follow-up actions to program reviews, fire preparedness
- 29 reviews, fire and aviation safety reviews, and management reviews.
- 30 • Monitor the fire situation and provide oversight during periods of critical
- 31 fire activity and situations of high risk.
- 32 • Ensure there is adequate direction in fire management plans to maintain fire
- 33 danger awareness.
- 34 • Take appropriate actions with escalating fire potential.
- 35 • Ensure appropriate investigation and analyses are conducted for incidents,
- 36 entrapments, and serious accidents.

37

38 Prescribed Fire

- 39 • Ensure an approved burn plan is followed for each prescribed fire project,
- 40 including follow-up monitoring and documentation to ensure management
- 41 objectives are met.
- 42 • Provide management oversight by personally visiting wildland and
- 43 prescribed fire activities each year.

- 1 • Ensure compliance with National and Regional Office policy and direction
2 for prescribed fire activities and ensure that periodic reviews and
3 inspections of the prescribed fire program are completed.
- 4 • Approve Prescribed Fire Plans. Authority may be delegated to the agency
5 administrators as provided under specific directions.
- 6 • Review Prescribed Fire Plans and recommend or approve the plans
7 depending upon the delegated authority. Ensure that the Prescribed Fire
8 Plan has been reviewed and recommended by a qualified technical reviewer
9 who was not involved in the plan preparation.

10

11 Fire Management Positions

12 The following lists show the minimum operational experience recommended for
13 fire management positions. The *Interagency Fire Program Management*
14 *Qualifications Standard (including FS-FPM Fire Program Management)* will be
15 used as a guide in conjunction with specific agency requirements when filling
16 vacant fire program positions, and as an aid in developing Individual
17 Development Plans (IDPs) for employees.

18

**19 Specific Fire Management Staff Performance Standards for Fire
20 Operations at the Field Level**

21

22 Preparedness

- 23 • Use sound risk management practices as the foundation for all aspects of
24 fire and aviation management.
- 25 • Ensure that only trained and qualified personnel are assigned to fire and
26 aviation duties.
- 27 • Develop, implement, evaluate, and document fire and aviation training
28 program to meet current and anticipated needs.
- 29 • Establish an effective process to gather, evaluate, and communicate
30 information to managers, supervisors, and employees. Ensure clear concise
31 communications are maintained at all levels.
- 32 • Ensure fire and aviation management staffs understand their roles,
33 responsibilities, authority, and accountability.
- 34 • Develop and maintain effective communication with the public and
35 cooperators.
- 36 • Regardless of funding level, provide a safe, effective, and efficient fire
37 management program.
- 38 • Organize, train, equip, and direct a qualified work force. An Individual
39 Development Plan (IDP) must be provided for incumbents who do not meet
40 new standards. Establish qualification review process.
- 41 • Take appropriate action when performance is exceptional or deficient.
- 42 • Ensure fire and aviation policies are understood, followed, and coordinated
43 with other agencies as appropriate.
- 44 • Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement fire management
45 operations.

- 1 • Provide fire personnel with adequate guidance, training, and decision-
- 2 making authority to ensure timely decisions.
- 3 • Develop and maintain agreements, annual operating plans, and contracts on
- 4 an interagency basis to increase effectiveness and efficiencies.
- 5 • Develop, maintain, and annually evaluate the FMP to ensure accuracy and
- 6 validity.
- 7 • Ensure budget requests and allocations reflect preparedness requirements in
- 8 the FMP.
- 9 • Develop and maintain current operational plans. (e.g., dispatch, pre-attack,
- 10 prevention).
- 11 • Ensure that reports and records are properly completed and maintained.
- 12 • Ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability in planning and expenditures.
- 13 • Assess, identify, and implement program actions that effectively reduce
- 14 unwanted wildland fire ignitions and mitigate risks to life, property, and
- 15 resources.
- 16 • Work with cooperators to identify processes and procedures for providing
- 17 fire safe communities within the wildland urban interface.

18

19 Suppression

- 20 • Ensure completion of a job hazard analysis (JHA) for fire and fire aviation
- 21 activities, and implement applicable risk mitigation measures.
- 22 • Provide for and personally participate in periodic site visits to individual
- 23 incidents and projects.
- 24 • Utilize the incident complexity analysis to ensure the proper level of
- 25 management is assigned to all incidents.
- 26 • Ensure incoming personnel and crews are briefed prior to fire and aviation
- 27 assignments.
- 28 • Coordinate the development of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System
- 29 with local unit staff specialists for all fires that escape initial attack.
- 30 • Ensure effective transfer of command of incident management occurs and
- 31 safety is considered in all functional areas.
- 32 • Monitor fire activity to anticipate and recognize when complexity levels
- 33 exceed program capabilities. Increase managerial and operational resources
- 34 to meet needs.
- 35 • Complete cost recovery actions when unplanned human-caused fires occur.
- 36 • Ensure structure exposure protection principles are followed.

37

38 Safety

- 39 • Ensure work/rest and R&R guidelines are followed during all fire and
- 40 aviation activities. Deviations are approved and documented.
- 41 • Initiate, conduct, and/or participate in fire management related reviews and
- 42 investigations.
- 43 • Monitor fire season severity predictions, fire behavior, and fire activity
- 44 levels. Take appropriate actions to ensure safe, efficient, and effective
- 45 operations.

1 Prescribed Fire

- 2 • Ensure a written, approved burn plan exists for each prescribed fire project.
- 3 • Ensure all escaped prescribed fires receive a review at the proper level.
- 4 • Provide the expertise and skills to fully integrate fire and aviation
- 5 management into interdisciplinary planning efforts.
- 6 • Ensure compliance with National and Regional Office policy and direction
- 7 for prescribed fire activities and ensure that program reviews and
- 8 inspections of the prescribed fire program are completed.

10 Structure Exposure Protection Principles**12 Mission and Role**

13 A significant role of the Forest Service is to manage natural resources on public
14 land, and management of unwanted wildland fire is a primary mission in that
15 role. Wildland firefighter training, tools, and personal protective equipment are
16 based on the wildland environment. This does not prevent using wildland
17 tactics in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) when risks are mitigated.
18 Wildland firefighter training for the WUI, however, is centered on the concepts
19 of preventing wildland fire from reaching areas of structures and/or reducing the
20 intensity of fire that does reach structures. Fire suppression actions on structures
21 that are outside federal jurisdiction, outside the scope of wildland firefighting
22 training, or beyond the capability of wildland firefighting resources are not
23 appropriate roles for the Forest Service.

24
25 Forest Service leadership will express clear and concise “leader’s intent” to
26 ensure structure protection assignments are managed safely, effectively, and
27 efficiently. Leaders are expected to operate under existing policies and doctrine
28 under normal conditions. Where conflicts occur, employees will be expected to
29 weigh the risk versus gain, and operate within the intent of Agency policy and
30 doctrine.

32 Strategic Principles

- 33 • The Forest Service actively supports creation of Firewise Communities and
34 structures that can survive wildland fire without intervention. We support
35 the concept that property owners have primary responsibility for reducing
36 wildfire risks to their lands and assets.
- 37 • The Forest Service will actively work toward applying Firewise concepts to
38 all Forest Service owned structures, facilities, and permitted use to serve as
39 a model to publics and communities.
- 40 • The Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep wildland fires
41 from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk management
42 for firefighters and publics, fire behavior, values at risk including natural
43 resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional
44 authorities.

- 1 • The Forest Service will be proactive in developing agreements with
2 interagency partners to clarify its structure protection policy.
- 3 • The Forest Service structure protection role is based on the assumption that
4 other Departments and agencies will fulfill their primary roles and
5 responsibilities. The Forest Service will not usurp individual, local, or state
6 responsibility for structure protection.
- 7 • Prior to task implementation, a specific structure protection role briefing
8 will be accomplished.

9 10 **Tactical Applications**

11 12 **Structure Protection Definition**

13 Actions taken in advance of a fire reaching structures or other improvements are
14 intended to safely prevent the fire from damaging or destroying these values at
15 risk. For the Forest Service, structure protection involves the use of standard
16 wildland fire suppression tactics and control methods; including the use of
17 standard equipment, fire control lines, and the extinguishing of spot fires near or
18 on the structure when safe and practical.

19 20 **USFS Role**

21 As documented in a Forest Service doctrinal principle, “Agency employees
22 respond when they come across situations where human life is immediately at
23 risk or there is a clear emergency, and they are capable of assisting without
24 undue risk to themselves or others.” This principle serves as a foundational basis
25 for the roles employees play in structure protection.

26
27 Pursuant to this “structure protection” policy provided above, Forest Service
28 personnel may engage support from other cooperators in structure protection
29 activities when 1) requested by local government under terms of an approved
30 cooperative agreement or 2) when operating within a unified command. The
31 agency is permitted, without agreement, to render emergency assistance to a
32 local government in suppressing wildland fires, and in preserving life and
33 property from the threat of fire, when properly trained and equipped agency
34 resources are the closest to the need, and there is adequate leadership to do so
35 safely. The agency will NOT routinely provide primary emergency response
36 (medical aids, fire suppression, HAZMAT, etc... as identified on “run cards” or
37 preplanned dispatch scenarios) nor will the agency supplant the local
38 government responsibility to do so.

39
40 The contents of a cooperative agreement will clearly define the responsibilities
41 of partners. Regarding structural fire protection, typical Forest Service
42 responsibilities in the case of mutual aid, initial attack, extended attack, or large
43 fire support include:

- 44 • To provide initial attack through extended attack actions consistent with
45 application of wildland fire strategy and tactics.

- 1 • To supply water in support of tribal, state or local agencies having
2 jurisdictional responsibility for the fire. This would include the use of water
3 tenders, portable pumps, hose, tanks, and supporting draft sites.
- 4 • To assist or supply foam or chemical suppressant capability with engines or
5 aerial application.
- 6 • To assist local authorities in the event of evacuations.
- 7 • To assist local authorities by assessing (triaging) structures for defensibility
8 from wildfire.
- 9 • To coordinate with local authorities on actions taken by Private Structure
10 Protection Companies.

11

12 As such, there should not be an expectation that the Forest Service will:

- 13 • “Wrap” or set up and administer sprinklers around privately owned
14 structures
- 15 • Remove fuels immediately surrounding a structure such as brush,
16 landscaping or firewood.

17

18 As addressed above, the Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep
19 wildland fires from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk
20 management for firefighters and publics, fire behavior, values at risk including
21 natural resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional
22 authorities.

23

24 The Forest Service shall not:

- 25 • Take direct suppression actions on structures other than those that tactically
26 reduce the threat of fire spread to them.
- 27 • Enter structures or work on roofs of structures for the purpose of direct
28 suppression actions.

29

30 In consideration of Forest Service owned or leased structures outside of
31 structure fire protection areas these same policies apply. The use of Firewise
32 principles and aggressive fire prevention measures will be employed for Forest
33 Service structures at every opportunity.

34

35 If a Forest Service structure is determined to be at risk, “wrapping” or other
36 indirect protection methods for the structure can be authorized by the Agency
37 Administrator. Documentation of these decisions needs to be placed in the fire
38 documentation package and the unit files. Any employee engaged in
39 “wrapping” or other indirect methods of protection operations will be
40 thoroughly briefed and trained in correct safety and personal protection
41 equipment procedures, especially if the use of ladders or climbing on the
42 structure is necessary. In any case, the Forest Service holds that no structure is
43 worth the risk of serious injury to an employee in an attempt to protect that
44 structure or facility from fire.

45

1 **Local Government Role**

2 Local government has the responsibility for emergency response, including
3 structure protection, within their jurisdiction. This responsibility is usually
4 found within the fire agencies' charter and is substantiated by tax dollar revenue
5 (sales and/or property tax).

6
7 **Cost**

8 Local governments assume the financial responsibility for emergency response
9 activities, including structure protection, within their jurisdictions. Local
10 government will order resources deemed necessary to protect structures within
11 their jurisdiction. Local agencies will not be reimbursed for performing their
12 responsibilities within their jurisdiction.

13
14 **Tactical Operating Principles**

15 When engaging in structure protection activities, as defined above, Forest
16 Service personnel will apply the following principles:

- 17 • The first priority for all risk-decisions is human survival, both of firefighters
18 and the public.
- 19 • Incident containment strategies specifically address and integrate protection
20 of defensible improved property and wildland values.
- 21 • Direct protection of improved property is undertaken when it is safe to do
22 so, when there are sufficient time and appropriate resources available, and
23 when the action directly contributes to achieving overall incident objectives.
- 24 • Firefighter decision to accept direction to engage in structure protection
25 actions is based on the determination that the property is defensible and the
26 risk to firefighters can be safely mitigated under the current or potential fire
27 conditions.
- 28 • A decision to delay or withdraw from structure protection operations is the
29 appropriate course of action when made in consideration of firefighter
30 safety, current or potential fire behavior, or defensibility of the structure or
31 groups of structures.
- 32 • Firefighters at all levels are responsible to make risk-decisions appropriate
33 to their individual knowledge, experience, training, and situational
34 awareness.
- 35 • Every firefighter is responsible to be aware of the factors that affect their
36 judgment and the decision-making process, including: a realistic perception
37 of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities, the presence of life threat or
38 structures, fire behavior, availability of resources, social / political
39 pressures, mission focus, and personal distractions such as home, work,
40 health, and fatigue.
- 41 • An individual's ability to assimilate all available factors affecting
42 situational awareness is limited in a dynamic wildland urban interface fire
43 environment. Every firefighter is responsible to understand and recognize
44 these limitations, and to apply experience, training and personal judgment
45 to observe, orient, decide, and act in preparation for the "worst case".

- 1 • It is the responsibility of every firefighter to participate in the flow of
- 2 information with supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Clear and concise
- 3 communication is essential to overcome limitations in situational
- 4 awareness.